

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
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O R 100520Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8201
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2770
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6769

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, XF, US
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S "NEW YEAR'S INTERVIEW"

REF: A) TEL AVIV 6686, B) CAIRO 14903

SUMMARY: WHILE THE INTERVIEW, HIGHLIGHTS OF WHICH WERE
CONTAINED IN REF A(NOTAL), DID NOT OFFER ANYTHING
VERY NEW, IT WAS A WIDE-RANGING SURVEY OF HIS MAJOR
THEMES AND POINTS OF CONCERN AND OFFERED SOME INSIGHT
INTO PRINCIPLES AND RATIONALES WHICH UNDERLIE POLICY
IN THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. BEGIN USED THE INTERVIEW AS A
VEHICLE TO POINT OUT WHERE THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AND
WHERE IT IS GOING. END SUMMARY.

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1. BEGIN BELIEVES IN MAKING VIEWS CLEAR FROM THE
BEGINNING, RATHER THAN RELYING ON TACTICAL MANEUVER
TO POSTPONE HARD CHOICES. HE BELIEVES THAT IF THE
WORLD IS AWARE OF ISRAELI POSITIONS AND INTENTIONS,
EXPECTATIONS ON THE PART OF ALL CONCERNED WILL REMAIN
MORE REASONABLE AND PRESSURE ON ISRAEL WILL BE REDUCED.
HE CONSIDERED THE INTERVIEW AN APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY

TO EXPLAIN ISRAEL'S POSITIONS AND INTENTIONS, AND TO RECAP AND POSTULATE, IN VIEW OF THE COINCIDENCE OF THE APPROACHING END OF THE TRADITIONAL PERIOD OF "100 DAYS' GRACE" AND THE BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH NEW YEAR.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMS TO BE ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE A NEW SENSE OF DIRECTION FOR THE NATION, IN TERMS OF HISTORICAL PROCESSES AND HISTORICAL ERAS, WITH HIS REFERENCE IN HIS INTERVIEW TO THE LAST HISTORICAL ERA AS THE PERIOD SINCE THE 1967 WAR. NOTING HIS REFERENCE TO THE ISRAEL OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN, HE SEES THE COMING TEN YEARS AS A TIME FOR CONSOLIDATION OF GAINS AND DEFINITION OF THE FUTURE SHAPE OF ISRAEL, BY CARRYING THROUGH ON BASIC OBJECTIVES SUCH AS SETTLEMENT IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA, SOLIDIFYING SECURITY NEEDS BASED ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNITED STATES (NOT CONCESSIONS TO AMERICAN PRESSURE WHICH DID NOTHING TO FORESTALL CONFRONTATION IN MARCH), AND NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH EUROPE. THESE LONG RANGE CONCEPTS TAILORED TO BASIC OBJECTIVES WILL PROVIDE NEW INITIATIVE AND REPLACE AD HOC RESPONSES. BEGIN SAID THAT PEACE IS A HISTORICAL PROCESS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY BE REACHED, INFERRING THAT PRINCIPLES THEREFORE SHOULD NOT BE SACRIFICED TO GAIN TIME.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, BEGIN PUTS THE ARABS ON NOTICE
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THAT IF THEY WANT A PEACE SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL, THEY WILL HAVE TO TALK SINCERE PEACE, THAT TIME IS NOT A FACTOR, AND THAT ISRAEL IS WILLING TO WAIT UNTIL CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR TRUE PEACE. QUESTIONS SUCH AS BOUNDARIES AND HOMELANDS ARE NOT THE ISSUE, THE ISSUE REMAINS THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. THERE WILL BE NO INTERIM AGREEMENTS, NO ROGERS PLANS, NO "TRUSTEE-SHIP" -- THE ERA OF ISRAELI SELF-DELUSION IS OVER AND ARAB ACTIONS RATHER THAN WORLD OPINION WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE. THE ARABS WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE TANGIBLE PROOF. RATHER THAN ASSURANCES, THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ISRAEL.

4. IN REGARD TO THE WEST BANK, THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATED THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE JEWS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SETTLE JUDEA AND SAMARIA, BUT REQUESTS MODERATION ON THE PART OF GUSH EMUNIM UNTIL THE TIME IS MORE OPPORTUNE (PERHAPS AFTER THE UNITED STATES SEES THAT THE ARABS ARE NOT AS MODERATE AS THEY NOW APPEAR OR AFTER THE ARAB NATIONS HAVE SOLD OUT THE PALESTINIANS FOR PART OF THE SINAI AND GOLAN HEIGHTS.) IN HIS REMARKS CRITICIZING TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, HE

FOCUSED ON THE WEST BANK RATHER THAN GAZA, THE SINAI,
AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

5. ISRAEL, HE IS SAYING, IS FOR THE FIRST TIME MAKING
A SERIOUS EFFORT FOR PEACE, NOT JUST DISCUSSIONS ON
PEACE. LIKUD IS PROVIDING A NEW OUTLOOK, BASED ON HISTORY,
AND HIS GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING A VISION, THE LACK
OF WHICH WAS AN UNDERLYING FACTOR IN THE ALIGNMENT'S
DEFEAT IN THE LAST ELECTION.

6. IN SUMMATION, THE INTERVIEW SHOED A BEGIN ATTEMPTING
TO ENHANCE HIS POSITION AS A LEADER WHO IS COMPETENT
TO DEAL WITH A BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES. HE MADE NO NEW
DEPARTURES; HIS PUBLIC POSITIONS REMAIN THE SAME
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BECAUSE THEY REFLECT HIS PRINCIPLES AND ARE NOT JUST
BARGAINING CHIPS. HE REMAINS INFLEXIBLE ON THE ISSUES,
BUT HE IS LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE SAYING, IN EFFECT,
THE TIME HAS COME TO CONCEPTUALIZE NEW STRUCTURES --
STRUCTURES OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL, OF RELATIONS WITH
OTHER COUNTRIES, OF COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND, IF NOT
OF PEACE, THEN AT LEAST OF SECURITY.
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